From Scofield to the Oval Office: The Geopolitical Evolution of Prosperity Theology and American Dispensationalism

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This paper investigates the historical arc and contemporary synthesis of the Prosperity Gospel and Dispensationalist eschatology within American political power structures. Beginning with the metaphysical roots of the New Thought movement and the influential annotations of the Scofield Reference Bible, this study traces how fringe theological concepts migrated into the mainstream of the American "Religious Right." Special attention is given to the unique emergence of "Bapticostal" hybridity—a fusion of rigorous end-times mapping with the charismatic, wealth-centered "Word of Faith" movement. By analyzing the current integration of these ideologies within the White House Faith Office and their application to Middle Eastern diplomacy, the paper argues that the shift from observing prophecy to actively enacting it via military policy represents a fundamental transformation of statecraft. The transition of figures like Paula White-Cain from televangelism to executive advisory roles signals a departure from traditional evangelical political engagement, moving toward a "Seven Mountains" mandate that views global conflict, specifically with Iran, through the lens of a divine, unavoidable prelude to Armageddon.

Keywords: Prosperity Gospel, Dispensationalism, Scofield Reference Bible, Paula White-Cain, Word of Faith, Seven Mountains Mandate, Geopolitics, Iran-US Relations, Eschatology, Christian Nationalism, American Evangelicalism, Armageddon Theology.

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1. Introduction: The Convergence of Wealth and Warfare

The intersection of religious fervor and American political power has rarely seen a more potent or polarizing synthesis than in the opening decades of the twenty-first century. Traditionally, the American evangelical landscape was divided between the quietist, end-times focus of dispensationalism—popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible—and the aspirational, success-oriented rhetoric of the Prosperity Gospel. However, the current geopolitical climate, specifically regarding the escalating conflict with Iran and the internal dynamics of the White House, reveals that these two once-distinct threads have braided into a singular, aggressive ideology. This convergence has transformed the role of faith from a personal moral compass into a blueprint for statecraft and military engagement.

At the heart of this evolution is the belief that material prosperity and national dominance are not merely secular achievements but are indicators of divine favor. This "Bapticostal" framework suggests that the United States, led by a specifically "anointed" figure, holds a mandate to secure both economic blessing and the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. When high-ranking spiritual advisors, such as Paula White-Cain, engage in high-profile prayer sessions within the Oval Office, they are not simply offering pastoral support. They are invoking a theology that views global conflict—particularly in the Middle East—as a necessary, divinely orchestrated step toward the culmination of human history.

This introduction sets the stage for a deep dive into how the "Word of Faith" movement's focus on the power of the spoken word has merged with a rigid, Scofield-inspired map of the apocalypse. By framing military maneuvers like Operation Epic Fury not as preventable tragedies but as the inevitable onset of Armageddon, this theological shift effectively removes the diplomatic "off-switch." As the administration increasingly views its policy through the lens of a cosmic struggle between light and darkness, the distinction between a political objective and a spiritual "assignment" begins to vanish. This paper will argue that this institutionalization of Armageddon theology represents a fundamental and dangerous departure from traditional American pluralism and rationalist foreign policy.

2. The Metaphysical Foundation: New Thought and the Roots of Prosperity

The modern architecture of prosperity theology was not built on traditional Reformation doctrines, but rather on the eclectic foundations of the late nineteenth-century New Thought movement. Before it was ever preached from a Christian pulpit, the core tenet—that the human mind possesses the innate ability to manifest physical and material reality—was a secular and metaphysical proposition. Figures such as Phineas Quimby, Ralph Waldo Trine, and Mary Baker Eddy pioneered a philosophy of "mind over matter," suggesting that sickness, poverty, and

failure were merely the results of "wrong thinking" or a lack of alignment with a universal spiritual energy.

This era saw the birth of the "law of attraction" and the belief in the creative power of the spoken word. The New Thought proponents argued that the universe was governed by mental laws as predictable as the laws of physics. If an individual could visualize a desired outcome and speak it into existence with unwavering conviction, the material world was obligated to respond. This radical shift in human agency essentially moved the source of "blessing" from the sovereign will of a deity to the psychological discipline of the believer. It transformed faith into a functional tool for personal advancement and physical health, stripping away the traditional emphasis on suffering or divine mystery.

The bridge between these metaphysical ideas and the Christian church was constructed by influential thinkers like E.W. Kenyon. Kenyon, who studied at Emerson College of Oratory—a hotbed of New Thought ideas—began to infuse his evangelical preaching with this mental-science vocabulary. He repackaged the concept of "positive confession" by grounding it in biblical proof-texts, most notably from the Markan and Pauline epistles. By framing the "power of the tongue" as a biblical mandate rather than a psychological trick, Kenyon provided a theological loophole that allowed Christians to pursue the "American Dream" with spiritual justification.

This period marks the critical moment when the pursuit of wealth was decoupled from the "Protestant Work Ethic" described by Max Weber. No longer was prosperity the incidental byproduct of thrift and labor; it became a direct, supernatural result of "correct" faith. This metaphysical root system is what allows modern prosperity ministries to maintain that poverty is not a systemic or economic issue, but a spiritual one. By the time this ideology reached the mid-twentieth century, the stage was set for it to merge with the apocalyptic urgency of the dispensationalists, creating a potent mix of material entitlement and end-times expectation.

3. The Scofield Revolution: Mapping the End of the World

While the prosperity movement provided the "engine" of desire, the **Scofield Reference Bible** provided the "map" for the end of history. Published in 1909 by Oxford University Press, Cyrus I. Scofield’s annotated Bible became the most influential theological document in the history of American Fundamentalism. Scofield did not merely translate the text; he inserted a comprehensive system of subheadings, cross-references, and footnotes that institutionalized a specific framework known as **Dispensationalism**. This system divided human history into seven distinct "dispensations" or eras, each defined by a specific test of obedience and a subsequent failure by humanity.

The genius of the Scofield Revolution lay in its ability to make the complex and often contradictory prophecies of Daniel and Revelation appear as a logical, chronological sequence of future events. For the average believer, Scofield turned the Bible into a decoded military manual. Central to this map was the re-establishment of the nation of Israel and the belief that the "Church Age" was a mere parenthesis in God's primary dealings with the Jewish people. This created a rigid, deterministic view of history where certain geopolitical conflicts—particularly those involving Russia, "Persia" (Iran), and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem—were seen as unavoidable prerequisites for the return of Christ.

By the mid-twentieth century, Scofield's footnotes were often treated with the same authority as the biblical text itself. This "Scofieldian" worldview stripped away the emphasis on social reform or the gradual "Christianizing" of the world, replacing it with a "rescue mission" mentality. If the world was destined to burn in a Great Tribulation, there was little point in long-term environmental or social preservation; the goal was to identify the signs of the times and prepare for the Rapture. This deterministic outlook provided the perfect ideological vacuum for the later Prosperity Gospel to fill. While Scofield taught that the world was ending, the Prosperity preachers taught that one should live in total abundance until the moment it did.

The most dangerous legacy of the Scofield Revolution, however, was the literalization of ancient geographic descriptors. By identifying modern Iran as the biblical "Persia" destined to attack Israel in the War of Gog and Magog, Scofield's followers began to view Middle Eastern diplomacy not through the lens of national interest, but as a theater for the fulfillment of divine wrath. This transformed the "adversary" from a political opponent into a prophetic necessity, a mindset that would eventually migrate from the pews of rural churches directly into the briefing rooms of the modern executive branch.

4. The Post-War Healing Revivals: Roberts, Hagin, and the Seed Faith Model

In the years following World War II, the metaphysical theories of the nineteenth century and the prophetic maps of Scofield found a new, high-energy delivery system: the giant tent revival. This era, stretching from the late 1940s through the 1950s, saw the rise of independent evangelists who bypassed traditional denominational structures to bring a message of supernatural intervention directly to the masses. Two figures stand as the architectural giants of this period: Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin. While Roberts brought the spectacle of divine healing to the forefront, Hagin provided the intellectual framework for what would become the Word of Faith movement.

Oral Roberts revolutionized the economics of ministry by introducing the "Seed Faith" model. This concept fundamentally altered the nature of the religious tithe. Rather than giving out of a

sense of duty or gratitude, followers were encouraged to give as a strategic investment. Roberts taught that a financial gift to his ministry was a "seed" planted in fertile spiritual ground, which, by a divine law of reciprocity, would result in a "harvest" of health and wealth for the giver. This turned the act of donation into a transactional contract with the divine. It was during this period that the prosperity message moved from being a fringe metaphysical idea to a core component of the burgeoning charismatic movement.

Simultaneously, Kenneth Hagin—often called the "Father of the Word of Faith"—was refining the doctrine of "Positive Confession." Hagin taught that the believer's words had the power to create reality because man was created in the "image of God" and therefore possessed a "God-kind of faith." This theology suggested that if a believer spoke a desire aloud with enough conviction, God was legally bound by His own Word to manifest that desire. Hagin's teachings effectively merged the "mind power" of New Thought with a rigorous, literalist interpretation of the Bible, creating a spiritual technology that promised total control over one's environment.

The impact of this era cannot be overstated. It democratized the miraculous, suggesting that any believer could access the same power as the apostles if they simply understood the "laws" of faith. However, it also introduced a darker corollary: if a believer remained poor or sick, it was framed as a personal failure of faith or a "legal" entry point for demonic influence. By the time the tent revivals transitioned into the television age, the Seed Faith model had created a self-sustaining financial engine that would eventually fund the most powerful religious-political lobbying efforts in American history.

5. The Televangelism Era: Domesticating the American Dream

The transition from the canvas tents of the 1950s to the television studios of the 1970s and 1980s represented more than a change in medium; it was a fundamental rebranding of the Christian faith to align with the burgeoning consumer culture of the United States. Televangelism took the raw, often chaotic energy of the healing revivals and polished it for a middle-class audience. Figures like Pat Robertson, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, and Kenneth Copeland utilized the power of satellite broadcasting to create 24-hour spiritual networks, such as the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) and the PTL Club. In doing so, they moved the Prosperity Gospel from the fringes of Pentecostalism into the heart of the American living room.

During this period, the "blessing" was increasingly defined through the lens of the American Dream. The message shifted from mere survival or physical healing to the acquisition of luxury goods as a sign of spiritual maturity. Televangelists began to appear in high-end suits, broadcasting from opulent sets that mirrored the daytime talk shows of the era. This visual rhetoric argued that if the messenger was wealthy, the message must be true. The "Seed Faith"

model was supercharged by the "toll-free number," allowing for immediate, emotional financial transactions during live broadcasts. The theology became a mirror for the Reagan-era "trickle-down" economics, suggesting that spiritual capital worked much like financial capital: the more you invested in the "Kingdom" (the ministry), the more "returns" you would see in your personal bank account.

However, this domestication of the miraculous also led to significant institutionalization. The 1980s saw the rise of the "Electronic Church" as a political voting bloc. By framing financial success as a divine right, these ministries inadvertently groomed their audiences to support political policies that deregulated wealth and prioritized American exceptionalism. The collapse of the PTL ministry in the late 1980s due to financial and moral scandals served as a temporary setback, but it did not kill the movement. Instead, it pruned the weaker branches, leaving behind a more sophisticated, media-savvy generation of leaders who understood that the ultimate "prosperity" involved not just owning a private jet, but possessing a seat at the table of global political power.

6. The "Bapticostal" Synthesis: Merging Prophetic Maps with Charismatic Power

The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a theological merger that fundamentally altered the American religious right. This phenomenon, often termed "Bapticostalism," represents the bridge between the rigid, intellectual end-times mapping of traditional Southern Baptists (the Scofield legacy) and the high-octane, experiential power of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Previously, these groups were often at odds: the Dispensationalists viewed modern miracles with skepticism, while the Charismatics viewed the strict "charts and graphs" approach to prophecy as spiritually dry. The synthesis of these two schools created a new, aggressive form of Christianity that combined a belief in the imminent end of the world with the conviction that believers should wield supernatural power and financial dominance until the moment of the Rapture.

This synthesis resolved a major tension within the movement. If the world was ending soon (as Scofield predicted), why pursue extreme wealth (as Hagin preached)? The "Bapticostal" answer was that wealth was a weapon for the "end-time harvest." Money was no longer just for personal comfort; it was rebranded as "Kingdom Financing" to fund the final push for global evangelization and the support of the State of Israel. This shift moved the prosperity message from a self-help philosophy to a militant, strategic necessity. It also brought the "prophetic" into the realm of current events. Suddenly, a change in the price of oil, a peace treaty in the Middle East, or a presidential election were not just news—they were "prophetic markers" that required a charismatic response.

The "Bapticostal" hybrid also introduced a more corporate and militarized vocabulary into the church. Leaders began to be referred to as "Generals" or "Apostles," and prayer was reframed as "Intercessory Warfare." This language served to desensitize the laity to the realities of actual warfare, framing physical conflicts as mere shadows of a superior spiritual battle. When this theology reached the highest levels of government, it provided a framework where a politician's aggressive foreign policy could be interpreted by millions of voters as a "divine assignment." By merging the Scofield map with the "Word of Faith" engine, this movement created a demographic that was both highly motivated to see the world end and financially equipped to influence the policies that might bring that end about.

7. The Seven Mountains Mandate: From Spiritual Warfare to Political Dominion

While the earlier prosperity movement focused on individual gain, the "Seven Mountains Mandate" (7M) represent the transition to institutional conquest. Emerging from the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), this theology argues that for Christ to return, Christians must first take control of the seven "mountains" or spheres of societal influence: Education, Religion, Family, Business, Government, Entertainment, and Media. This is a radical departure from the "escape-oriented" Dispensationalism of the Scofield era; it is a theology of **Dominionism**.

In this framework, the "Properity" of the believer is redirected toward the funding of a cultural and political takeover. The mandate teaches that the wealth of the "unrighteous" is being held in reserve for the "righteous" to claim in the end times. This provides a spiritual imperative for high-level lobbying and the placement of "Kingdom-minded" individuals in key government and military positions. When a figure like Paula White-Cain enters the White House, she is viewed by followers not merely as a chaplain, but as a "legislator in the spirit" who is successfully occupying the Mountain of Government.

The Seven Mountains Mandate effectively militarizes the Prosperity Gospel. Spiritual warfare is no longer just about personal demons; it is about "territorial spirits" over nations and government offices. This worldview creates a binary of "God's side" versus "The Enemy's side," which leaves no room for the pluralistic compromise required in a democracy. By framing political opponents as spiritual obstacles to the "Kingdom," 7M theology provides the moral justification for bypasssing traditional norms to achieve a "divine" result. For the current administration, this has meant that policy decisions—from Supreme Court appointments to Middle East interventions—are framed to the base as successful "mountain climbs" in a cosmic war.

8. The Anointed Leader Narrative: Cyrus, Trump, and Divine Appointment

The convergence of prosperity theology and dispensationalism required a specific type of political avatar to bridge the gap between the pulpit and the Pentagon. This was found in the "Cyrus Cylinder" narrative, a theological framework that compares a modern secular leader to the Persian King Cyrus the Great. In the biblical book of Ezra and the prophecies of Isaiah, Cyrus is described as an "unbeliever" who was nevertheless "anointed" by God to liberate the Jews from Babylon and facilitate the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. This archetype allowed the prosperity movement to pivot away from requiring a leader with traditional personal piety, focusing instead on the leader's "divine assignment."

By framing a political figure as a "Modern Cyrus," advisors like Paula White-Cain provided a theological shield against secular criticism. In this view, personal flaws or a lack of conventional religious background are irrelevant; what matters is the leader's role in the "prophetic timeline." For the "Bapticostal" base, the President's support for Israel and his willingness to confront Iran are seen as primary evidence of this anointing. This narrative suggests that the leader is not merely a civil servant but a tool in the hands of the Almighty, specifically chosen to "shake" the nations and prepare the way for the Third Temple and the eventual return of Christ.

This "Anointed Leader" narrative has profound implications for military and domestic policy. When a leader is seen as divinely appointed, their decisions are often viewed as infallible or "prophetically directed," making dissent appear not just as political opposition, but as spiritual rebellion. This has created a unique "cult of the commander" within certain sectors of the military and the evangelical public. As the conflict with Iran intensifies, the administration has leaned heavily into this imagery, suggesting that the current war is the fulfillment of the "Cyrus Mandate" to break the power of modern "Persia." This ensures a base of support that is not only loyal but believes that to oppose the administration's war efforts is to oppose the will of God Himself.

9. Case Study: Operation Epic Fury and the Theology of Necessary Conflict

The practical application of "Armageddon theology" reached a tipping point on February 28, 2026, with the commencement of Operation Epic Fury. While the administration officially cited the dismantling of Iranian nuclear capabilities and the prevention of imminent threats as the primary objectives, the internal and rhetorical framing of the conflict suggested a much deeper, prophetic motivation. This operation serves as a modern case study in how dispensationalist maps and prosperity "anointing" narratives can bypass traditional diplomatic constraints to pursue what is perceived as a divinely mandated war.

Evidence of this theological steering is most visible in the "unrestricted euphoria" reported within certain command chains. According to reports from the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), over 200 service members have filed complaints alleging that their superiors are framing the strikes on Tehran and Isfahan not as strategic maneuvers, but as the fulfillment of the "Gog and Magog" war described in Ezekiel. In official briefings, some commanders have explicitly told troops that the war is "all part of God's divine plan" and that the President was "anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon." This framing transforms the soldier from a defender of the Constitution into a participant in a cosmic apocalypse, a shift that critics argue destroys unit cohesion and violates the fundamental separation of church and state.

The danger of this "Theology of Necessary Conflict" lies in its rejection of de-escalation. In a standard geopolitical conflict, a "win" is defined by a negotiated peace or the neutralization of a specific threat. However, within the framework of Operation Epic Fury, the "bloody" nature of the conflict is often seen as a verification of its prophetic authenticity. Prominent religious advisors to the administration have publicly celebrated the strikes as aligning with biblical feast days and end-times timelines, reinforcing the idea that the violence is a prerequisite for the Second Coming. By characterizing the Iranian regime as a "snake" that must be decapitated to usher in a new spiritual era, the administration has effectively removed the "off-switch" from its foreign policy, moving toward a demand for "unconditional surrender" that mirrors the finality of the Book of Revelation.

10. The Institutionalization of Faith: The Modern White House Faith Office

In February 2025, the transition from informal advisory roles to a formalized bureaucratic structure was completed with the establishment of the White House Faith Office via Executive Order 14205. Unlike previous iterations of faith-based initiatives, which focused largely on social service partnerships and community grants, this new office was specifically designed to embed "prophetic" oversight within the executive branch. Housed within the Domestic Policy Council and led by Senior Advisor Paula White-Cain, the office functions as a bridge between the "Seven Mountains" theology of the charismatic movement and the administrative machinery of the federal government.

The institutionalization of this office has created a permanent "faith-based" presence across every major federal agency through the appointment of "Faith Liaisons." These roles are tasked not only with ensuring religious liberty but with identifying and purging what the administration calls "anti-Christian bias" within the Department of Justice, the IRS, and the FBI. This represents a significant shift in the application of the Prosperity Gospel: the "blessing" is no longer just a

personal financial breakthrough but an institutional "reformation" of the state itself. By creating a direct reporting line to the President, the Faith Office ensures that the administration's policy agenda—including its stance on the conflict with Iran—is continuously vetted and framed through the lens of a specific, militant eschatology.

Critics argue that this office serves as a modern-day "Star Chamber" for theological vetting, where policy is judged not by its secular merit but by its alignment with the "Cyrus Mandate." The office also facilitates the "Oval Office prayer circles" that have become a hallmark of the current administration's decision-making process during Operation Epic Fury. By providing a government-sanctioned platform for leaders who preach the necessity of Armageddon, the White House Faith Office has effectively blurred the line between a religious non-profit and a government department. This institutionalization ensures that even if the leadership changes, the "Bapticostal" infrastructure of the American state remains intact, ready to interpret future geopolitical crises as signs of the end.

11. Global Implications: The Export of Armageddon Theology to the Global South

The theological developments within the American White House do not remain contained within domestic borders; they are a primary export of American "soft power," fundamentally reshaping Christianity in the Global South. As of 2026, over 70% of the world's Christians live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In these regions, the "Bapticostal" synthesis has found fertile ground, merging with local Pentecostal movements to create a global network that mirrors the American administration's eschatological priorities. Prosperity theology, once a Western luxury, has been reframed in these contexts as a survival strategy, where "seed faith" is the perceived key to escaping systemic poverty.

The impact of this export is most visible in the "unconditional solidarity" with American military policy. In nations like Nigeria and Brazil, prominent megachurch leaders—many of whom maintain direct ties to Paula White-Cain's network—have framed Operation Epic Fury as a necessary purification of the Middle East. This has led to a phenomenon of "vicarious dispensationalism," where believers in the Global South view American military dominance as a prerequisite for their own spiritual and material breakthrough. In Nigeria specifically, the designation of the country as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) by the Trump administration in early 2026 has been interpreted by local Christian leaders as a divine intervention, further entrenching the "Anointed Leader" narrative on a global scale.

However, the globalization of Armageddon theology also exports the "off-switch" problem. By promoting a worldview that sees geopolitical stability as an obstacle to the Second Coming, American prosperity ministries are influencing foreign policy in developing nations. In South

Korea and parts of Central America, "Seven Mountains" theology has inspired political movements that prioritize prophetic alignment over regional diplomacy. This creates a feedback loop where American religious-political goals are reinforced by a global base, making it increasingly difficult for future administrations to pivot toward secular rationalism. The result is a synchronized, globalized religious front that views the current conflict with Iran not as a tragedy to be averted, but as a long-awaited milestone in the history of the world.

12. Conclusion: The Risks of a Policy Without an "Off-Switch"

The trajectory from the individualistic "mind-power" of the New Thought movement to the state-sponsored "Armageddon theology" of the present day reveals a fundamental transformation in the American religious and political psyche. What began as a marginalized quest for personal health and wealth has metastasized into a comprehensive ideology of global dominion. By merging the rigid, deterministic "maps" of Scofield's Dispensationalism with the aggressive, "anointed" certainties of the Prosperity Gospel, modern advisors have provided the executive branch with a theological mandate that operates outside the bounds of traditional diplomatic accountability.

The primary risk of this synthesis is the elimination of the political "off-switch." In a rationalist framework, war is a failure of diplomacy, and its conclusion is sought through de-escalation or strategic victory. However, in the "Bapticostal" framework currently influencing Operation Epic Fury, the conflict is viewed as a prophetic necessity—a "labor pain" of the apocalypse. If a leader believes they are divinely commissioned to trigger the end of the world, there is no incentive for peace, as peace would imply a delay in the return of Christ. This creates a dangerous feedback loop where military aggression is seen as spiritual obedience, and casualties are reframed as "sacrifices" on the altar of a looming millennium.

Furthermore, the institutionalization of this theology via the White House Faith Office ensures that these ideas are not merely passing whims of a single leader but are becoming embedded in the very machinery of the state. As this "Armageddon theology" is exported to the Global South, it creates a worldwide constituency that views global instability not as a crisis to be solved, but as a sign to be celebrated. The challenge for the future of American democracy and global security will be whether the state can decouple its military and foreign policy from an eschatology that views the destruction of the current world order as its ultimate success. Without a return to a pluralistic and rationalist foundation, the pursuit of "prosperity" may ironically lead to the ultimate global bankruptcy of a final, unmanageable conflict.

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EZEKIEL 38-39
BLACK SEA
GOG & MAGOG
SYRIA
MIDDLE EAST SEA
EGYPT
SCOFIELD
REFERENCE BIBLE
THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS
ARC OF THE COVENANT
CYRUS CYLINDER
FAITH AND JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL
WHITE HOUSE FAITH OFFICE
OPERATION EPIC FURY
BRIEFING: TEHRAN TARGETS
IRAN
OIL LAMP
SEED FAITH
SOMETHING GREATER:
PAULA WHITE-CAIN
F-35 STEALTH FIGHTER JET
FROM SCOFIELD TO THE OVAL OFFICE:
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This paper investigates the historical arc and contemporary synthesis of the Prosperity Gospel and
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